

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully acknowledge receipt of the Final Office Action mailed August 26, 2005.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 1-12 and indicated that claims 1-12 would be allowable if amended to overcome the objections set forth in the Final Office Action.

By this Amendment After Final, Applicants propose to amend claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 8-12. Claims 1-12 remain pending. Of these claims, claim 1 is independent.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 8-12. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-12. Accordingly, as suggested by the Examiner, Applicants have amended claims 1-12 to overcome the objections set forth in the Final Office Action in order to place claims 1-12 in condition for allowance.

Based on the foregoing amendments, Applicants traverse the objections to claims 1-12 and respectfully request reconsideration for at least the reasons that follow.

I. OBJECTIONS TO CLAIMS 1-12

Claims 1-12 stand objected to because of a few informalities. Specifically, the Examiner asserts:

"In claim 1, 'a first link portion' and 'a second link portion' should be changed to -- first link portions -- and -- second link portions --... 'an engagement portion' should be changed to -- engagement portions --... 'portion is' should be changed to -- portions

are --...” (*Office Action*, p. 2, ll. 2-9). Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 1 as suggested by the Examiner.

“In claim 2, lines 6-7 should state -- each of the link bodies has a first link portion and a second link portion --.” (*Office Action*, p. 2, ll. 10-11). Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 2 as suggested by the Examiner.

“In claim 4, ‘the first link portion’ and ‘the second link portion’ should be changed to -- a first link portion -- and -- a second link portion --...‘of the link body’ should be changed to -- of each of the link bodies --.” (*Office Action*, p. 2, ll. 12-14). Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner’s objections. Applicants submit there is proper antecedent basis for “the first link portion” and the “second link portion,” as claim 4 indirectly depends from claim 2, which positively recites “a first link portion” and “a second link portion.” However, Applicants have amended claim 4 to recite, *inter alia*, “of each of the link bodies,” as suggested by the Examiner.

“In claim 5, ‘portion’ should be changed to -- portions --.” (*Office Action*, p. 2, line 15). Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 5 as suggested by the Examiner.

“In claim 6, ‘is curved’ should be changed to -- curves --...‘portion’ should be changed to -- portions --...” (*Office Action*, p. 2, ll. 16-18). Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 6 as suggested by the Examiner.

“In claim 8, ‘the first link portion’ should be changed to -- each of the first link portions --.” (*Office Action*, p. 2, line 19). Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 8 as suggested by the Examiner.

“In claim 9, ‘the engagement portion’ should be changed to -- each of the engagement portions --...‘the sides’ should be changed to -- a side --...” (*Office Action*,

p. 3, II. 1-2). Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 9 as suggested by the Examiner.

"In claim 10, 'of the link body' should be changed to -- of each link body --... 'the second link portion' should be changed to -- its second link portion --..." Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's objections. Applicants have amended "of the link body" to recite, *inter alia*, "of each of the link bodies," in order to maintain consistency throughout the entire claim set. In addition, Applicants submit there is proper antecedent basis for "the second link portion," as claim 10 indirectly depends from claim 2, which positively recites "a second link portion."

"In claims 11 and 12, 'the second link portion' and 'the engagement portion' should be changed to -- each of the second link portions -- and -- each of the engagement portions --..." (*Office Action*, p. 3, II. 5-7). Accordingly, Applicants have amended claims 11 and 12 as suggested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, in view of Applicants' amendments to claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8-12, Applicants respectfully request the objection of claims 1-12 be withdrawn, placing claims 1-12 in condition for allowance.

II. CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-12 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 8-12 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier

claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the final action by the Examiner presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicants' invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the Amendment would allow the Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants submit that the entry of the amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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